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## **NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK**

It's been said that volunteers are the heart and soul of a community. As we celebrate National Volunteer Week, I hope you'll take a moment to thank those individuals who represent the spirit of our community – the volunteers who selflessly lend their time, energy and talents to make the 36th Senate District a better place to live.

National Volunteer Week, celebrated this year from April 17-23, began in 1974 as a way to recognize the men, women and young people who serve their communities in the American tradition of neighbor helping neighbor. Here in the 36th Senate District, it's easy to see how many lives they touch. From Scout leaders to Red Cross aides, from reading tutors to Habitat for Humanity laborers, from hospice volunteers to "Adopt-a-Road" squads, these special people make a difference.

Their caring and commitment not only helps people in need, but strengthens the very neighborhoods and communities in which we live. Their contributions truly enrich our quality of life. Yet most volunteers will tell you they receive much more than what they give – more joy, more fulfillment, and more satisfaction in helping others.

The theme, "Inspire by Example," demonstrates the power of volunteers to inspire the people they help as well as inspiring others to serve their communities. In this way, the simple act of helping others grows to be a priceless gift that keeps on giving. And what better way to help young people discover compassion and the spirit of service than leading by example.

If you would like to join the ranks of neighbors helping neighbors, but don't know where to start, please contact your church or synagogue, or local Volunteer Center. Or access links to service and volunteer sites at [www.mivolunteers.org](http://www.mivolunteers.org).

Recognizing the importance of volunteering, I will be volunteering and working at a Habitat For Humanity building in Alpena on Monday, April 18. Please take a few hours out of your busy schedule to lend your neighbors and community a helping hand.

State Sen. Tony Stamas  
36th Senate District